

# Full Day Kindergarten

## **Newtown Public Schools' Proposal for Enhancing the K-12 Instructional Program**

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# Why Full-Day Kindergarten?

The expectation for what students must know and be able to do by the end of kindergarten has changed. Our kindergarten day does not have the time required for instruction to meet the demands of:

- **The Common Core State Standards**
- **Connecticut State Department of Education Position Statements on English Language Arts and Mathematics Education**
- **Connecticut State Department of Education Pacing Guides**

# The Kindergarten Team's Initial Action Steps

- Developed list of guiding questions for their FDK inquiry
- Researched similar and local districts to find out which offer FDK
- Planned visits and conducted phone interviews to schools with FDK
- Observed FDK programs and collected information
- Kindergarten and Early Intervention Teachers compiled and shared their data in the winter of 2012

# What We Are Doing AND What We Need To Do In Kindergarten

| CONTENT AREA                                                                  | DAILY MINUTES IN<br>2-3/4 HOUR PROGRAM | AVERAGE DAILY MINUTES IN<br>PROGRAMS STUDIED | CONNECTICUT<br>MINIMUM MINUTES                                                       |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| LANGUAGE ARTS                                                                 | 45-60                                  | 150                                          | 120<br>As per CSDE Position Statement<br>on English Language Arts Education, 12/3/08 |
| MATHEMATICS                                                                   | 15-20                                  | 60                                           | 60<br>As per CSDE Mathematics Specialist                                             |
| SCIENCE, SOCIAL STUDIES,<br>HEALTH                                            | 10-15                                  | 30                                           |                                                                                      |
| MORNING MEETING/CALENDAR                                                      | 10-15                                  | 30                                           |                                                                                      |
| HANDWRITING                                                                   | 5                                      | 15                                           |                                                                                      |
| COMPUTER LAB                                                                  | >5                                     | 5-10                                         |                                                                                      |
| UNIFIED ARTS<br>(Music, Art, Physical Education,<br>Library-Media)            | 20-25                                  | 40                                           |                                                                                      |
| CENTERS                                                                       | 0-15                                   | (included in academics)                      |                                                                                      |
| SNACK/LUNCH                                                                   | 10-15                                  | 40-50                                        |                                                                                      |
| RECESS                                                                        | 0-5                                    | 25                                           | Daily as per CT P.A. 04-224, S. 1. Sec. 10-221o.<br>Lunch periods. Recess.           |
| NPS AVAILABLE INSTRUCTIONAL<br>TIME<br>(includes transitions not noted above) | 169 minutes                            | 387<br>Minutes*                              | INSUFFICIENT<br>As per<br>the State of Connecticut                                   |

\*Some full day program observed/interviewed had longer instructional days than NPS.



## 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skill Components to be Included with or Enhanced by Full-Day Kindergarten

- Opportunities to question at a deeper level and to ask follow up questions to check for understanding and probe for deeper thinking
- Increase opportunities for student discourse
- Opportunities to integrate technology skills into daily instruction
- Integrated Units of Study
- Inquiry-based science activities
- More meaningful curriculum-related field trips

## Language Arts Components to be Included with or Enhanced by Full-Day Kindergarten

- Independent reading/readers' workshop
- Full read aloud with discussion, retelling, higher order questioning
- More time for guided reading
- More comprehensive writers' workshop
- Increased opportunities for writing across the curriculum
- Increased opportunities for intervention for struggling readers & writers
- Increased enrichment for advanced readers & writers

## Mathematics Components to be Included with or Enhanced by Full-Day Kindergarten

- Math every day
- Math lesson with integrated concepts
- Increased opportunities for intervention for learners struggling with numeracy
- Increased enrichment for learners advanced in numeracy

## Social Development Components to be Included with or Enhanced by Full-Day Kindergarten

- Developmentally appropriate pace
- Sufficient opportunity to develop stamina in all curricular areas as well as in independent work
- Opportunities for fine motor development embedded in academics and unified arts classes
- More time morning meeting/Responsive Classroom
- Social skill building through academically grounded play
- Time to reinforce and practice self-help skills
- Recess every day
- Participation in school-based assemblies
- Smoother, more consistent transition from kindergarten to first grade



# What We Learned

In our current program, our teachers are compelled to make daily decisions about which lessons to teach and which to leave out. This leads to inconsistency of our kindergarten students' academic experience across classrooms and across the district.

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Students' period of adjustment to a full day of school occurs in first grade instead of in kindergarten.

Academic expectations for first grade have increased as dramatically as they have for kindergarten; limited instructional time in kindergarten will have a domino effect throughout the grades.

# What We Learned

- **In our 2-3/4 hour program, we cannot provide the number of instructional hours needed to teach the Common Core State Standards.**
  - Common Core State Standards requires 155 hours of instructional time in kindergarten mathematics to focus on:
    - Representing, relating, and operating on whole numbers, initially with sets of objects
    - Describing shapes and space
  - Common Core State Standards require 355 hours of instructional time in kindergarten language arts to focus on:
    - Reading: Students comprehend and respond in literal, critical, and evaluative ways to various texts that are read, viewed, and heard.
    - Oral Language: Students will listen and speak to communicate ideas clearly.
    - Writing: Students will express, develop, and substantiate ideas and experiences through their own writing and artistic and technical presentations

[www.corestandards.org](http://www.corestandards.org)

# A Statement About the Research

In education, as in all areas of research, studies supporting diverse points of view are readily available. As educators, we agree that **“Fundamental and far-reaching changes in American society and in education require that full-day becomes the new standard for kindergarten,”** as stated in The Foundation for Child Development’s June 2010 Policy to Action Brief, *Pre-K – 3<sup>rd</sup>: Putting Full-day Kindergarten in the Middle*.



# The Foundation for Child Development Policy to Action Brief, *Pre-K – 3<sup>rd</sup>: Putting Full-day Kindergarten in the Middle*, June 2010

- *“Increasing evidence shows the efficacy of FDK in boosting children’s cognitive learning and academic achievement. Multiple studies based on data from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, as well as research from school district-based studies, show that children who participated in full-day programs made statistically significant gains in early reading skills...”* (Lash, Bae, Barrat, Burr, and Fong, 2008)
- *“Some of these studies also show a relationship between attendance in FDK and higher levels of early math skills.”* (Cannon, Jacknowitz, and Painter, 2006; Walston and West, 2004)
- *“FDK provides more time for children to play and learn experientially, encouraging not only their cognitive development but also their physical and social-emotional development.”* (Guarino, Hamilton, Lockwood, Rathbun and Germino-Hausken, 2006)

# WestEd Policy Brief, April 2005

- *“Research comparing half-day and full-day kindergarten shows that children benefit from a developmentally appropriate, full-day program, most notably in terms of early academic achievement – a foundation for school and life success.” (Villagas, 2005)*
- *“Achievement findings for full-day kindergarten students show a trend toward higher achievement. Achievement differences appear to persist over time and when other factors such as student demographics and classroom factors are taken into account.” (Villagas, 2005)*
- *“Even given the expense of expanding the kindergarten day, doing so is a cost-effective option for enhancing early learning...” (Villagas, 2005)*



# School Readiness, Full-Day Kindergarten, and Student Achievement: An Empirical Investigation

Rand Education, 2006

- *“Our results also suggest that investments in the development of nonacademic school readiness skills may not only raise overall achievement but may also narrow the achievement gap...”* (Le, Kirby, Barney, Setodji, Gershwin, 2006)
- *“Proponents of full-day kindergarten argue that these extended programs allow for greater individualization and self-directed activities.”* (Clark and Kirk, 2000; Elicker and Mathur, 1997)

# Planning for Implementation

- If Newtown supports full-day kindergarten, we will share our comprehensive plan for implementation with the Board of Education, parents, and the community.
- Our current kindergarten students will be the first group to take the new Common Core Smarter Balanced assessment. While our teachers are working to incorporate all of the requisite skills, there is simply not enough time in their day.
- Your support of this initiative is an investment not only in our community, but in the future of our children.